



Councillor  
**James Pasternak**  
York Centre

**Toronto City Hall**

City Hall, 100 Queen St. West, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, A22  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

01/08/2024

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

In recent months, there has been a growing number of protests and rallies on 401 overpass bridges around the Greater Toronto Area. These groups vary in size from a few people to dozens. The events include the waving of flags, the affixing of posters to the bridge overhang, and using noise amplification. At times, there are also counter protests. A 401 overpass is perhaps one of the most dangerous locations for protests and rallies. The intention of the protests is to deliberately distract drivers to bring attention to their cause, on one of the busiest highways in North America. It is only a matter of time before there is a catastrophic accident with fatalities, injuries and property damage. Because the overpass is municipal responsibility and the highway below is provincial, various issues have emerged about what enforcement measures the City of Toronto can take to keep the roadway free of protests and safe for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. There are also questions about how jurisdictional and enforcement measures are handled and divided between city staff (such as Municipal Licensing) and which are handled by Toronto Police Services. There is an urgency to see jurisdictional and enforcement clarity on this matter.

**Recommendation:**

The Infrastructure and Environment Committee requests the General Manager Transportation and City Solicitor report back to the February 6-7, 2024 City Council meeting on:

- a) existing safety policies and available enforcement measures to prevent driver distractions from rallies, protests, waving flags and affixing of banners on 401 overpasses including an itemized list of safety and enforcement measures to keep pedestrians, cyclists and motorists safe; and
- b) the jurisdictional responsibilities and roles of the City of Toronto, Province of Ontario, Toronto Police Services and Ontario Provincial in protecting the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists on 401 overpasses and the highway below.

Sincerely,

**Councillor James Pasternak**

Toronto - Ward 6, York Centre  
Chair, North York Community Council  
Chair, General Government Committee

